

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



February 29, 2016

Esteemed Chairs Guerrero and Maynard,  
Esteemed members of the Housing Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) would like to comment on  
HB 5411, *An Act Concerning Department of Transportation Recommendations*.

Our comments are as follows:

1. WestCOG **supports** replacement of the grant formula for the Local Bridge Program with a uniform 50%. A flat percentage is easier to calculate and to grasp than the existing formula, which is unnecessarily complex and requires annual adjustment. Use of simple, consistent local cost share will reduce the complexity of applying to and making funding awards under this important program.
2. WestCOG **does not support** attaching fees to the use of commuter park and ride lots. While user fees can be used to manage demand (as in congestion pricing), most of the state's park and ride lots have capacity to accommodate growth. We are concerned that fees will erode or eliminate the incentive to use these facilities, depressing carpool rates and forcing additional cars onto our highways. WestCOG cannot support any legislation that would add to the congestion that chokes our region's highways on a daily basis.

WestCOG is open to proposals to lessen traffic by creating or expanding park and ride lots in underserved areas, or where parking demand exceeds supply. Both conditions apply in southwest Connecticut: no park and ride lots exist on Interstate 95 west of U.S. Route 7; there are only two the Merritt Parkway west of Route 7 (and both fill up). In these areas, new capacity will attract new users and should be seriously considered.

*Please note that these comments relate only to park and ride lots along automobile routes and not to parking at fixed guideway transit facilities (e.g. rail and CTfastrak station parking).*

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francis Pickering". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Francis R. Pickering  
Executive Director